

What is claimed is:

1. A topical personal care composition having improved stability of a retinoid, comprising:
 - a) a retinoid;
 - b) a preservative selected from the group consisting of phenols, phenol salts, quaternium ammonium compounds, halogens, halogen salts, alcohols, inorganic salts, zinc pyrithione, emulsifying preservatives, and mixtures thereof; and
 - c) a dermatologically acceptable carrier;
 - d) wherein the composition is substantially free of parahydroxybenzoic acid esters.
2. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the composition comprises from about 0.01% to about 0.5%, by weight of the composition, of the retinoid.
3. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the retinoid is selected from the group consisting of retinol, retinol esters, retinal, retinoic acid, and mixtures thereof.
4. A topical composition according to Claim 3 wherein the retinoid is selected from the group consisting of retinyl palmitate, retinyl acetate, retinyl propionate, and mixtures thereof.
5. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the composition comprises from about 0.001 to about 0.25%, by weight of the composition, of the preservative.
6. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the preservative is selected from the group consisting of quaternium ammonium compounds, phenols, phenol salts, and mixtures thereof.
7. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the preservative is selected from the group consisting of pentyleneglycol, o-phenylphenol, sodium o-phenylphenol, chlorocresol, salicylic acid, salicylic acid salts, chloroxylenol, thymol, triclosan, cresols, benzalkonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, cetylpyridium chloride, sodium dehydroacetate, chlorhexidine, chlorhexidine salts, chloramine T, triclocarban, iodopropynyl butylcarbanate, chlorobutanol, chlorphenesin, hinokitol, silver chloride, zinc pyrithione, alkyldiaminodithiolglycine hydrochloride, glycerol caprylate, and mixtures thereof.

8. A topical composition according to Claim 7 wherein the preservative is selected from the group consisting of pentylene glycol, o-phenylphenol, thymol, benzalkonium chloride, sodium dehydroacetate, chlorhexidine, chlorhexidine gluconate, chloramine T, iodopropynyl butylcarbanate, and mixtures thereof.

9. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the composition is substantially free of formaldehyde and substantially free of formaldehyde donating materials.

10. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the composition comprises less than 0.01% of parahydroxybenzoic acid esters.

11. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the composition further comprises from about 0.01% to about 5% of a preservative enhancer selected from the group consisting of propylene glycol, butylene glycol, EDTA, disodium EDTA, tetrasodium EDTA, and mixtures thereof.

12. A topical composition according to Claim 1 wherein the composition further comprises a skin care active selected from the group consisting of vitamins, proteins, zeolites, peptides, skin-lightening agents, sunscreen actives, terpene alcohols, desquamation actives, anti-acne actives, anti-wrinkle actives, anti-atrophy actives, anti-oxidants, flavanoids, anti-inflammatory agents, anti-cellulite agents, topical anesthetics, tanning actives, skin soothing actives, skin healing actives, conditioning agents, and mixtures thereof

13. A method of regulating the condition of skin, said method comprising applying to the skin of a human in need of treatment, a safe and effective amount of a composition according to Claim 1.

14. A topical personal care composition having improved stability of a retinoid, comprising:

- a) a retinoid selected from the group consisting of retinyl esters, retinyl aldehydes, and mixtures thereof;
- b) a preservative; and
- c) a dermatologically acceptable carrier;

- d) wherein the composition is substantially free of parahydroxybenzoic acid esters; and
- e) wherein the composition is substantially free of formaldehyde and formaldehyde donating compounds.

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15. A topical composition according to Claim 14 wherein the composition comprises from about 0.01% to about 0.5%, by weight of the composition, of the retinoid.

16. A topical composition according to Claim 15 wherein the retinoid is selected from the group consisting of retinyl palmitate, retinyl propionate, retinyl acetate, and mixtures thereof.

17. A topical composition according to Claim 16 wherein the retinoid is retinyl propionate.

18. A topical composition according to Claim 14 wherein the composition comprises from about 0.001 to about 0.25%, by weight of the composition, of the preservative.

19. A topical composition according to Claim 14 wherein the preservative is selected from the group consisting of phenols, phenol salts, carboxylic acids, carboxylic acid salts, quaternium ammonium compounds, halogens, halogen salts, alcohols, inorganic salts, heterocyclic compounds, emulsifying preservatives, and mixtures thereof.

20. A topical composition according to Claim 19 wherein the preservative is selected from the group consisting of pentylene glycol, o-phenylphenol, sodium o-phenylphenol, chlorocresol, salicylic acid, sodium salicylate, magnesium salicylate, resorcin, chloroxylenol, thymol, triclosan, cresols, benzalkonium chloride, benzethonium chloride, cetylpyridium chloride, benzoic acid, sodium benzoate, sorbic acid, dehydroacetic acid, sodium dehydroacetate, chlorhexidine, chlorhexidine gluconate, chloramine T, triclocarban, iodopropynyl butylcarbanate, chlorobutanol, chlorphenesin, hinokitol, silver chloride, zinc pyrithione, alkyldiaminoethylglycine hydrochloride, glycerol caprylate, and mixtures thereof.

21. A topical composition according to Claim 20 wherein the preservative is selected from the group consisting of pentylene glycol, o-phenylphenol, thymol, benzalkonium chloride,

dehydroacetic acid, sodium dehydroacetate, chlorhexidine, chlorhexidine gluconate, chloramine T, iodopropynyl butylcarbanate, and mixtures thereof.

22. A topical composition according to Claim 14 wherein the composition comprises less than 0.01% of parahydroxybenzoic acid esters.

23. A topical composition according to Claim 14 wherein the composition further comprises from about 0.01% to about 5% of a preservative enhancer selected from the group consisting of pentylene glycol, butylene glycol, EDTA, disodium EDTA, tetrasodium EDTA, and mixtures thereof.

24. A topical composition according to Claim 14 wherein the composition further comprises a skin care active selected from the group consisting of vitamins, proteins, zeolites, peptides, skin-lightening agents, sunscreen actives, terpene alcohols, desquamation actives, anti-acne actives, anti-wrinkle actives, anti-atrophy actives, anti-oxidants, flavanoids, anti-inflammatory agents, anti-cellulite agents, topical anesthetics, tanning actives, skin soothing actives, skin healing actives, conditioning agents, and mixtures thereof

25. A method of regulating the condition of skin and/or hair, said method comprising applying to the skin and/or hair of a human in need of treatment, a safe and effective amount of a composition according to Claim 14.

26. A topical personal care composition having improved stability of a retinoid, comprising:

- a) from about 0.0001% to about 2% of a retinoid;
- b) an anti-oxidant;
- c) from about 0.1% to about 0.35% of a preservative selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acid, carboxylic acid salts, and mixtures thereof; and
- d) a dermatologically acceptable carrier;
- e) wherein the composition is substantially free of parahydroxybenzoic acid esters; and
- f) wherein the composition is substantially free of formaldehyde and formaldehyde donating compounds.